



Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

Public Open House

ATTENTION: If you speak another language other than English, language assistance services can be made available to you.

(Spanish) ATENCIÓN: Si habla otro idioma que no sea inglés, habrá servicios de asistencia en otros idiomas disponibles.

(Swahili) TAHADHARI: Ikiwa unazungumza lugha nyingine isipokuwa Kiingereza, huduma za usaidizi wa lugha zinaweza kupatikana kwako.

Survey



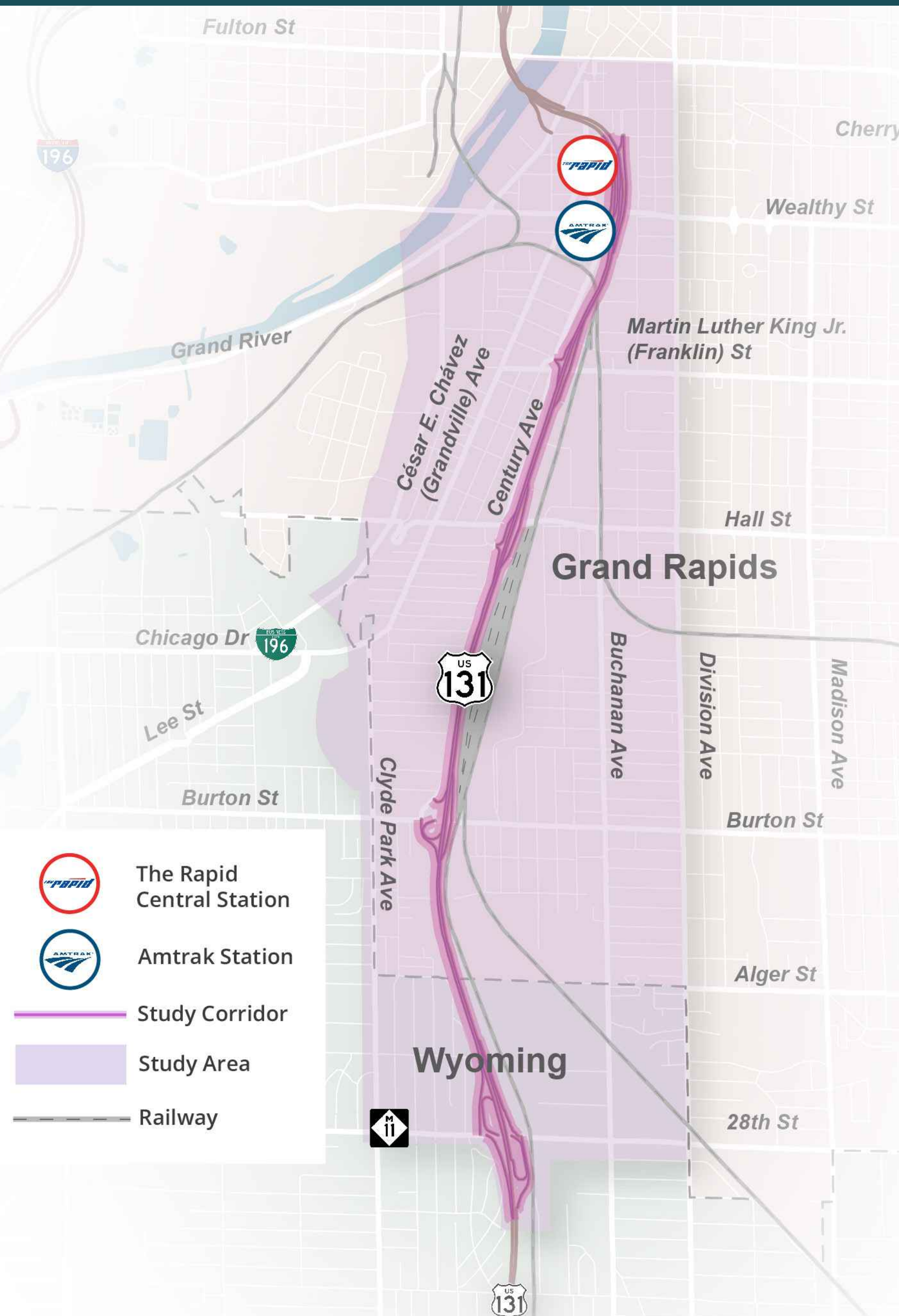
Online Resources





US-131 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY

STUDY OVERVIEW



Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

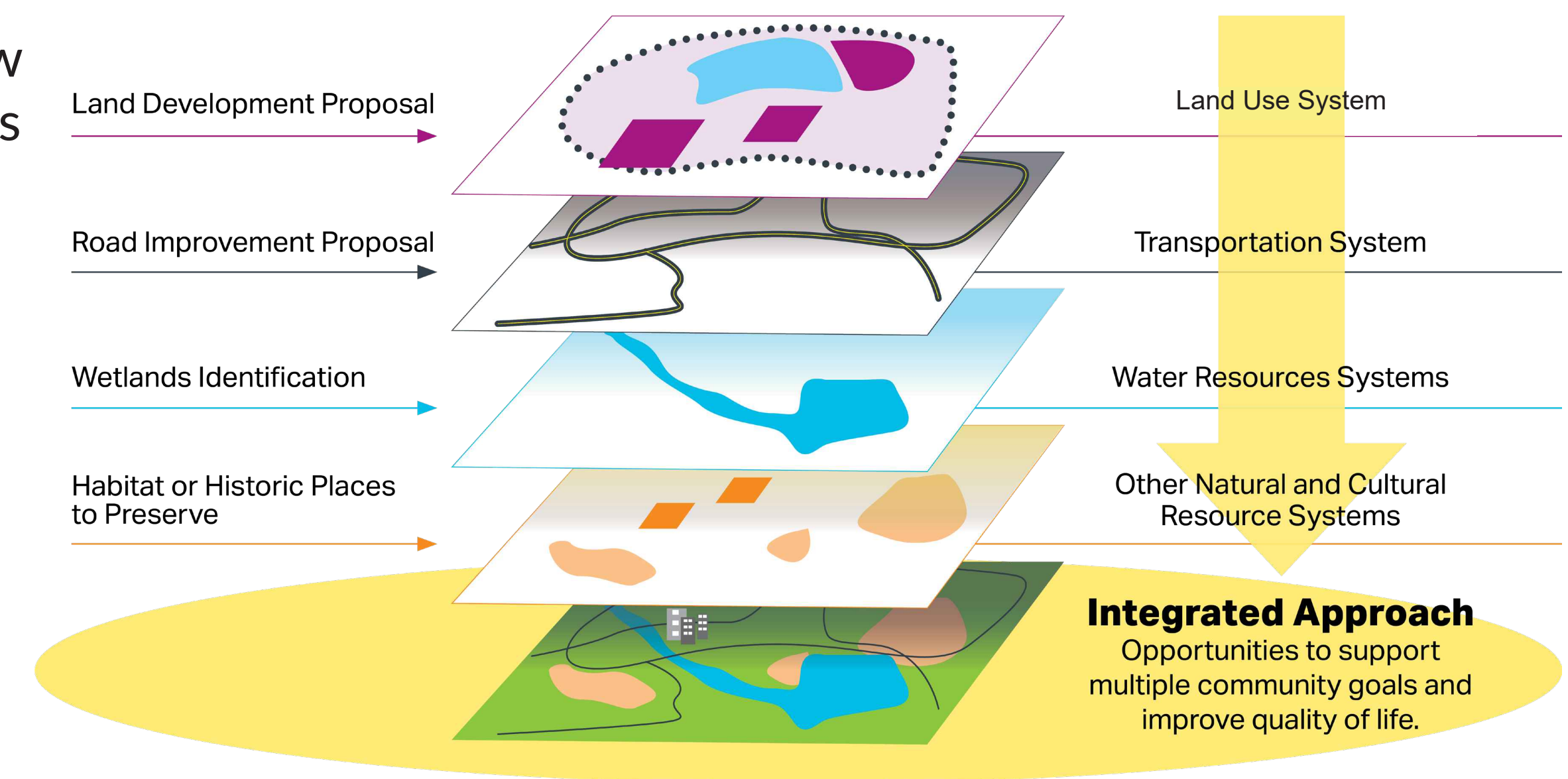
The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law on January 1, 1970. NEPA requires federal agencies and recipients of federal aid to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions and implementation.

Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL) is a transportation decision-making approach that integrates various aspects in the early transportation planning process before environmental review, as required by NEPA.

Study Corridor

The study corridor on the US-131 freeway segment is between M-11 (28th Street) and Wealthy Street. The PEL study considers the relationship of feasible options to land use, regional connectivity, and other needs from the adjacent communities.

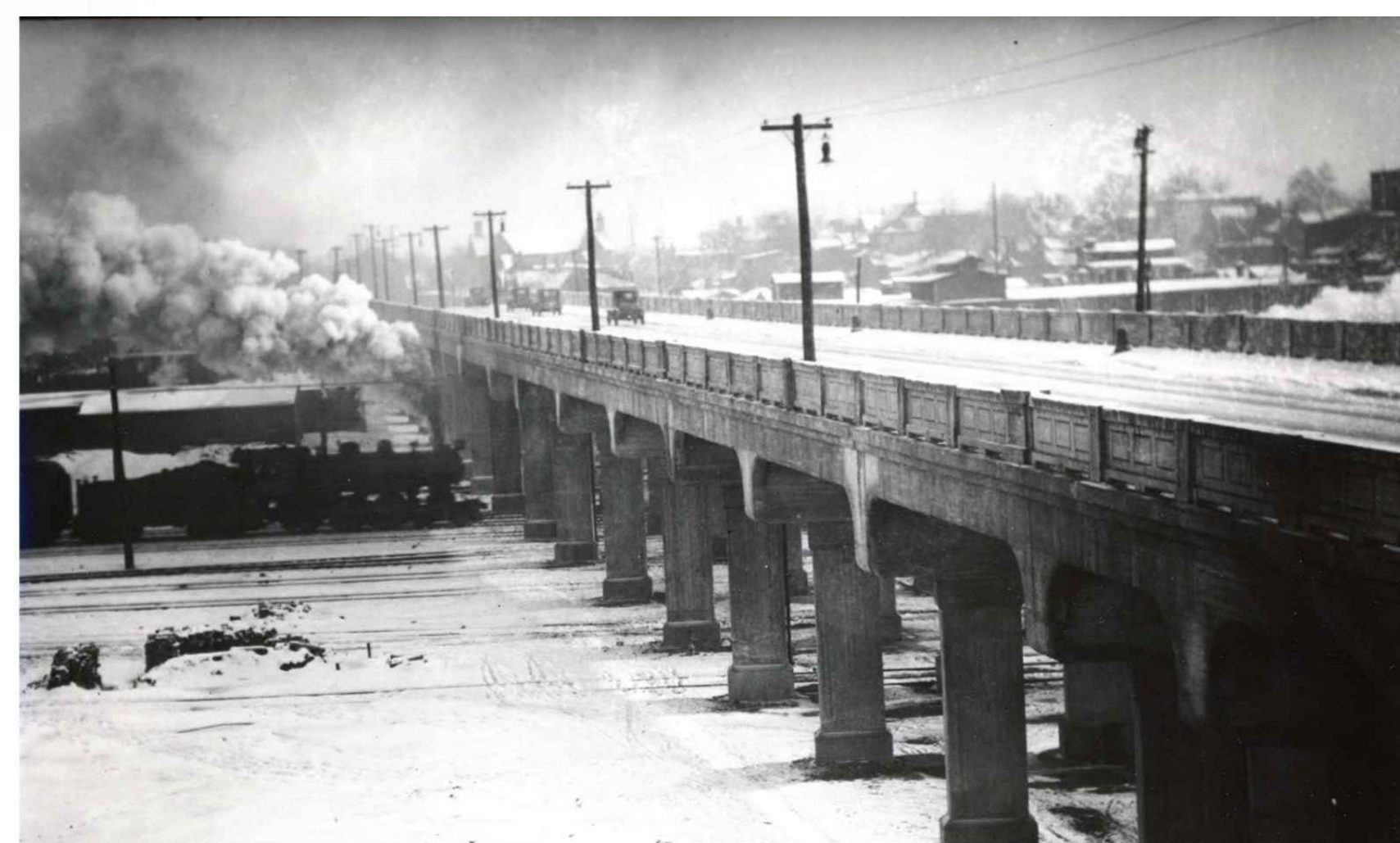
PEL Integrated Approach



History of US-131



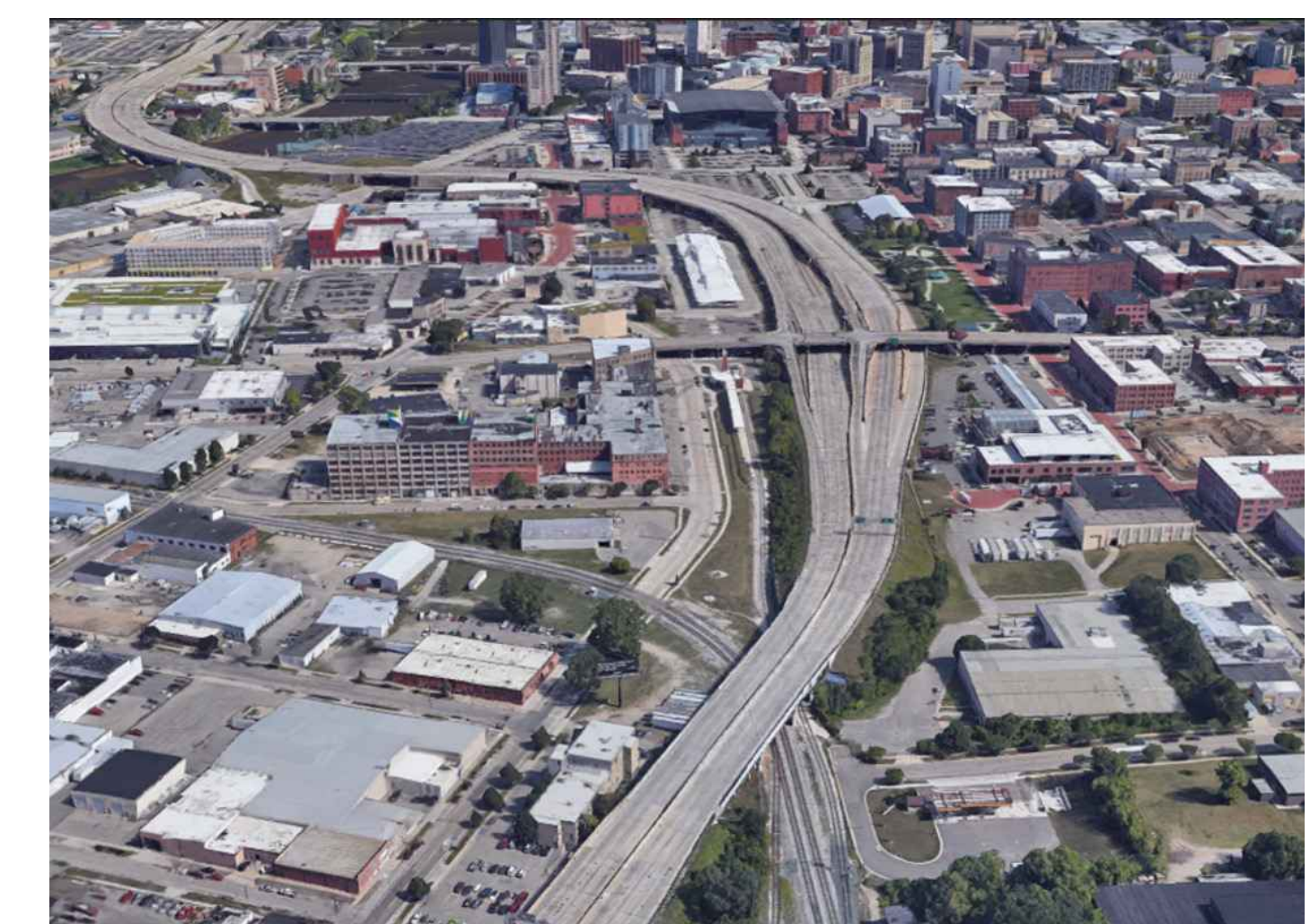
Traffic on Division Avenue south of Wealthy Street before the freeway



Franklin Street viaduct with train in 1925



US-131 site before the freeway in 1919



Current US-131 site in 2019



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EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES



Infrastructure Conditions

Many original structures, including the bridges over US-131 were built in early 1960s. Since 2000, MDOT has continued to conduct maintenance and repair projects (one or more each year). More comprehensive infrastructure renewal are required to avoid worsening conditions.

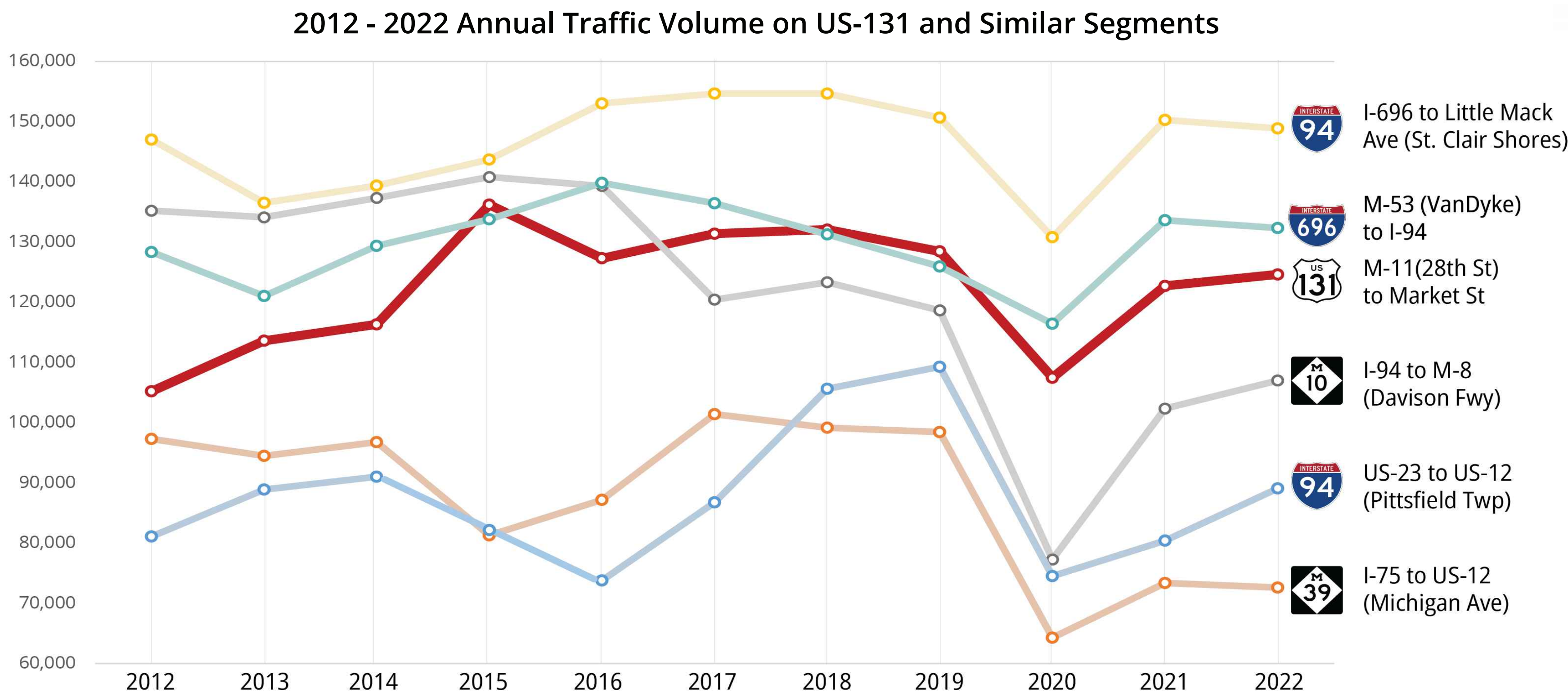


Existing pavement and bridge conditions of Wealthy Street interchange



Traffic Volumes

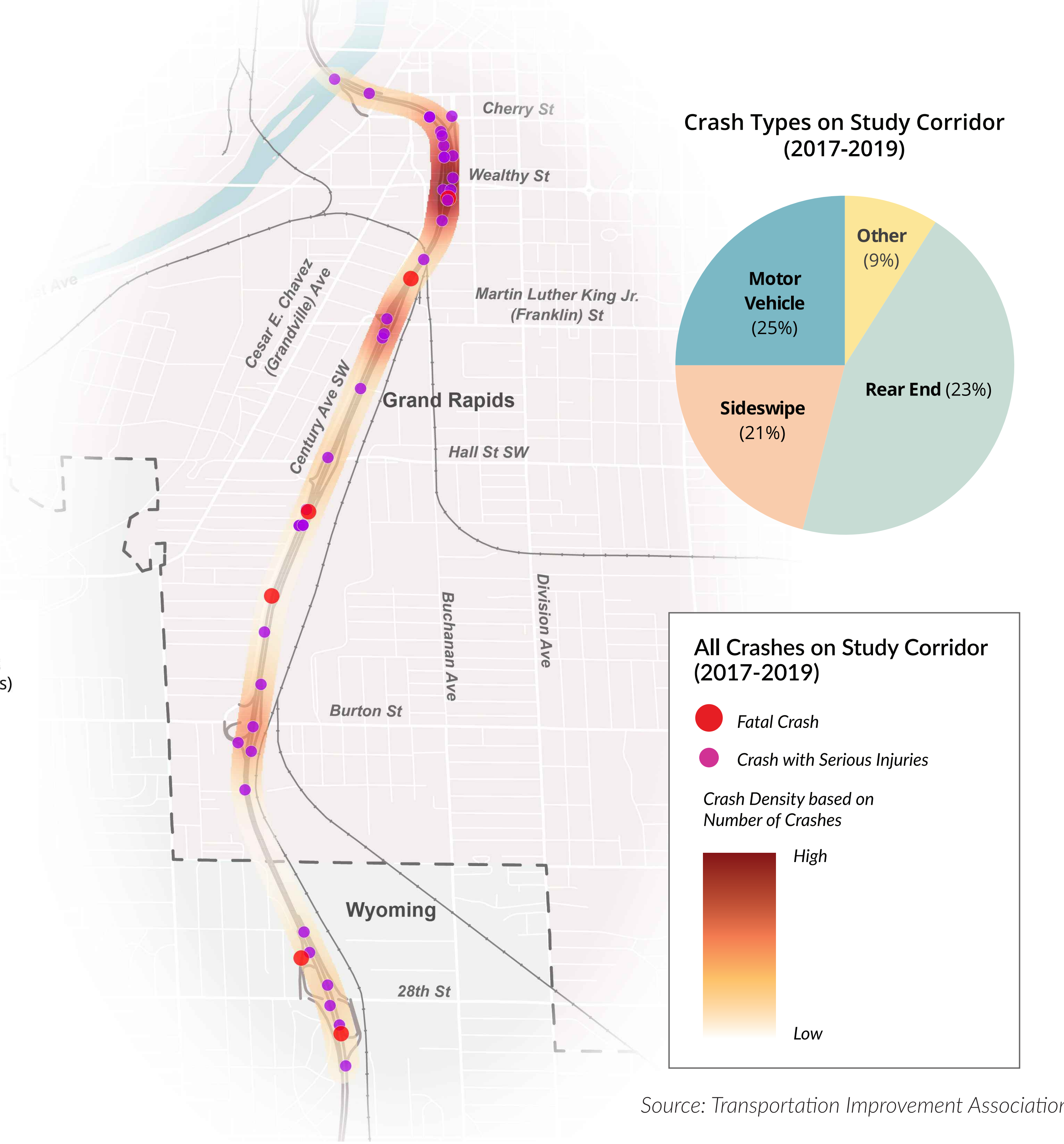
The US-131 freeway is the busiest freeway in west Michigan and experiences significant peak-period congestion. From mid 2000s to pre-pandemic, study corridor traffic grew more than 20 percent. Current annual counts show traffic returning to pre-pandemic levels.



Source: MDOT Traffic Count Database System

Safety

The Study Corridor has the highest crash rates in the Grand Rapids area. From 2017 to 2019, over 700 crashes occurred annually on the study corridor (including interchange ramps). Crashes also contribute to corridor congestion and reliability issues.



Source: Transportation Improvement Association



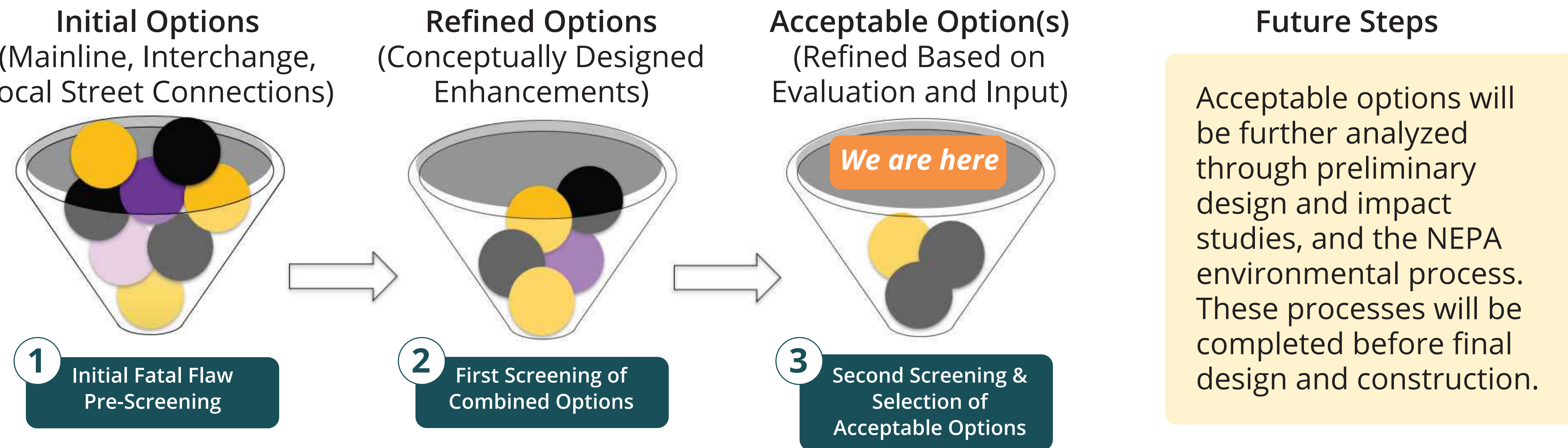
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OPTION EVALUATION AND PREVIOUS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

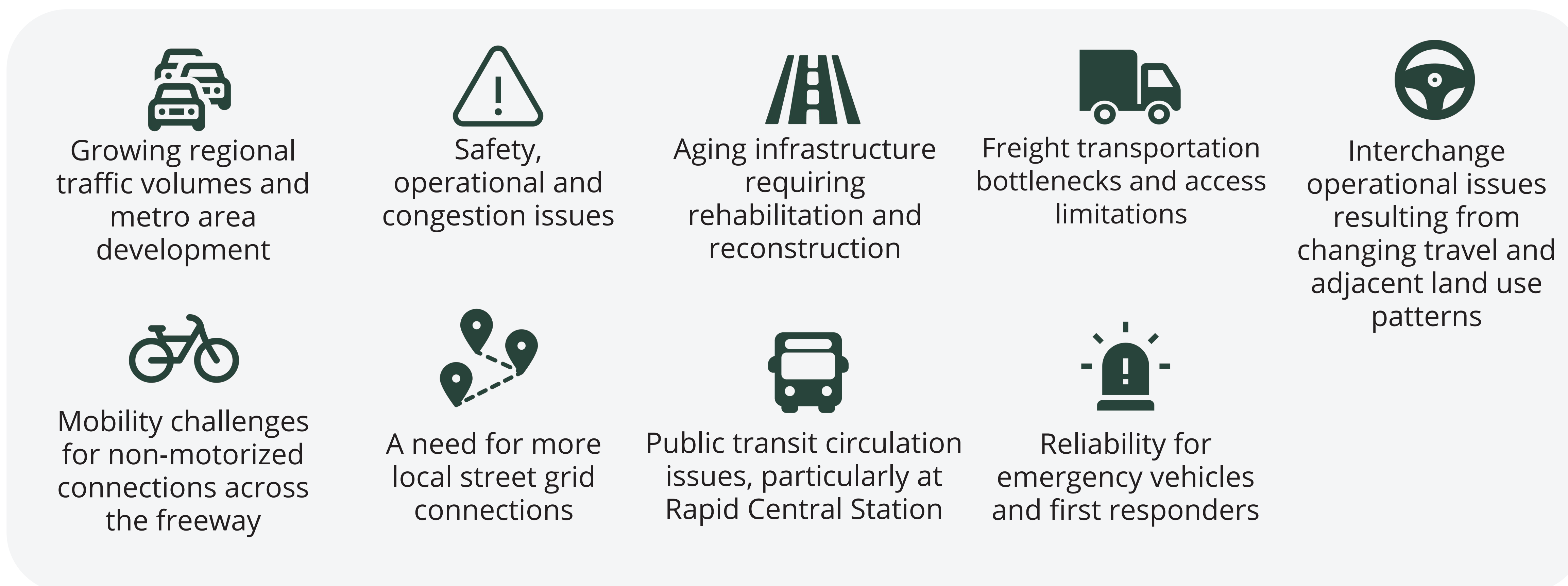


Options Development and Evaluation Process

The PEL Study has developed and evaluated multiple options for US-131. The Study is now recommending a set of acceptable options for further design and analysis.



US-131 Needs and Evaluation Criteria



Previous Public Engagement

Phase 1 Dec 2020 - Feb 2021

Activities: MetroQuest survey (>2,000 responses)

Primary Purpose: Collect information on needs for Study corridor.

Outcome: Public indicated that the **highest** priorities for the corridor as:

- Reducing Congestion
- Addressing Safety
- Fixing Infrastructure Conditions
- Improving Travel Time Reliability
- Enhancing Multi-Modal Safety/Comfort

Phase 2 Feb 2022 - Apr 2022

Activities: MetroQuest survey (>3,000 responses), virtual open house, targeted stakeholder meetings

Primary Purpose: Review and provide feedback on options for corridor reconfiguration.

Outcome: General support on the following Design Strategies:

- Adding lanes and shoulders
- Improving local street connections
- Supporting but also limiting truck traffic

Among the four initial options, those that **preserved Wealthy access and had Wealthy under** were most supported by public.



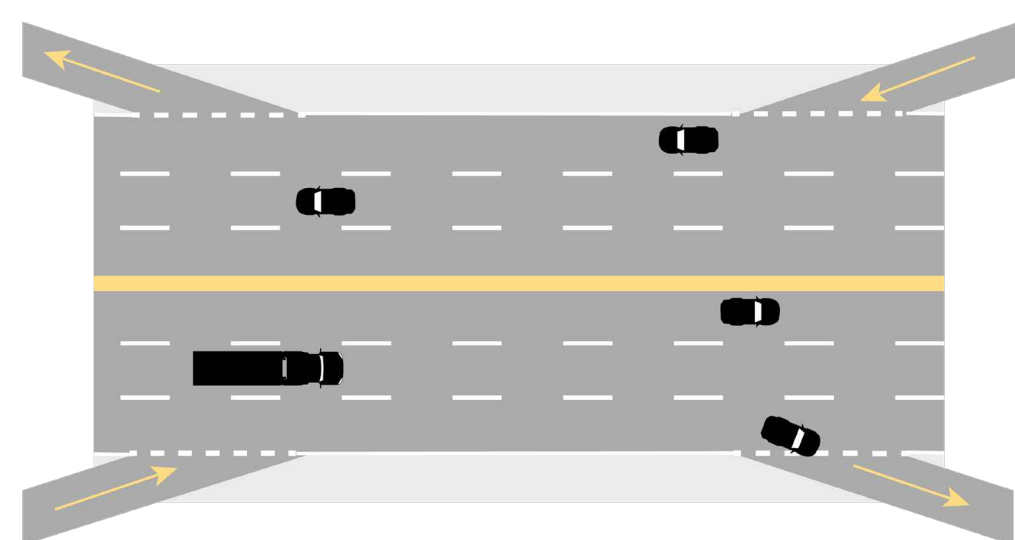
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CURRENT OPTIONS



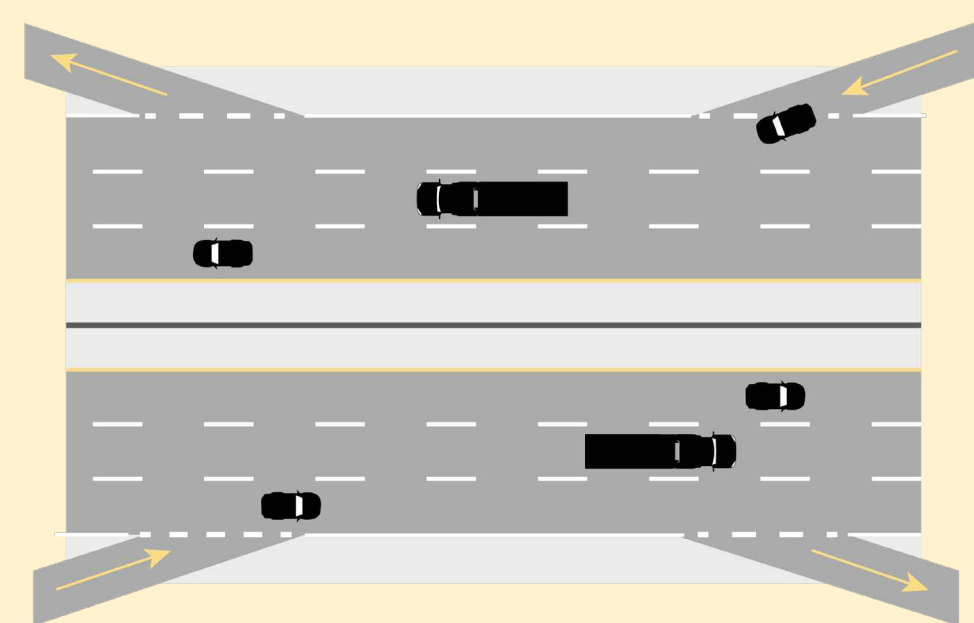
Freeway Lane Options

The options being considered incorporate added space on shoulders and/or lanes to improve safety and traffic operations. Three mainline options are considered for the PEL Study:

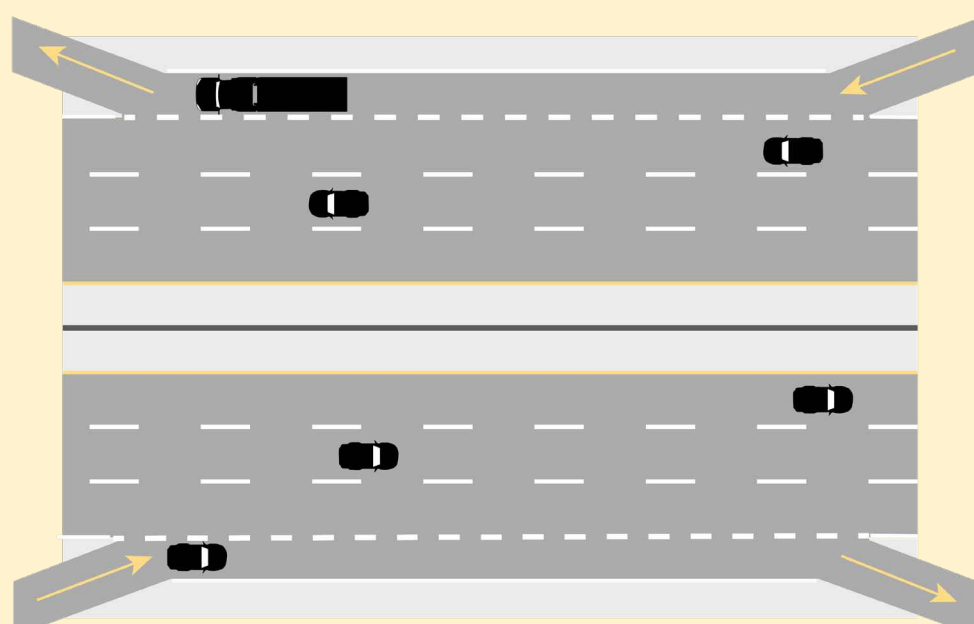


Current US-131 Freeway Lane:
three lanes (each direction) with
full outside shoulders

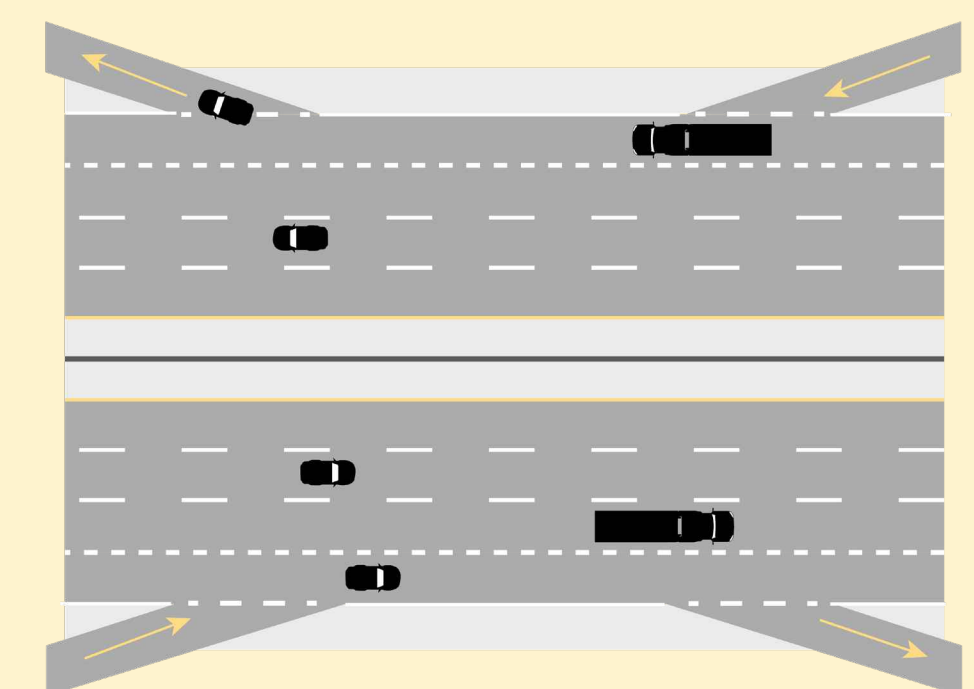
Freeway Lane Options



**1 Three lanes (each direction)
with full shoulders**



**2 Three lanes (each direction)
with added (weave/merge)
lane connecting between
ramps**



3 Four lanes (each direction)

Hall Street-to-Cherry Street Corridor Interchange Options

Both options:

- Emphasize access at Hall Street and Wealthy/Cherry Street, with right-side and longer on/off ramps.
- To provide more spacing between interchanges, MLK Jr. (Franklin) Street no longer has on/off ramps but remains as a local street crossing US-131.
- Local street connections added at Graham Street and Logan/Buckley streets.

**A Wealthy Street Underpass
+ MLK Jr. Street
Southbound Entrance**



**B Wealthy Street Overpass
+ MLK Jr. Street
Interchange Fully Closed**



Burton Street Interchange Options

A Combined Southbound Off-Ramp

This option removes the southbound off-ramp to Century Avenue and improves the southbound off-ramp with revised turning lanes and an improved intersection with Burton Street.

B Diamond Interchange

This option removes the southbound off-ramp to Century Avenue, and converts the southbound off loop ramp to a straight off-ramp to Burton Street.

Local Street Connections

The Study considers Logan Street, Buckley Street, Graham/Buchanan Street, Hynes Street, and Kirtland Street as opportunities to improve local street connections.



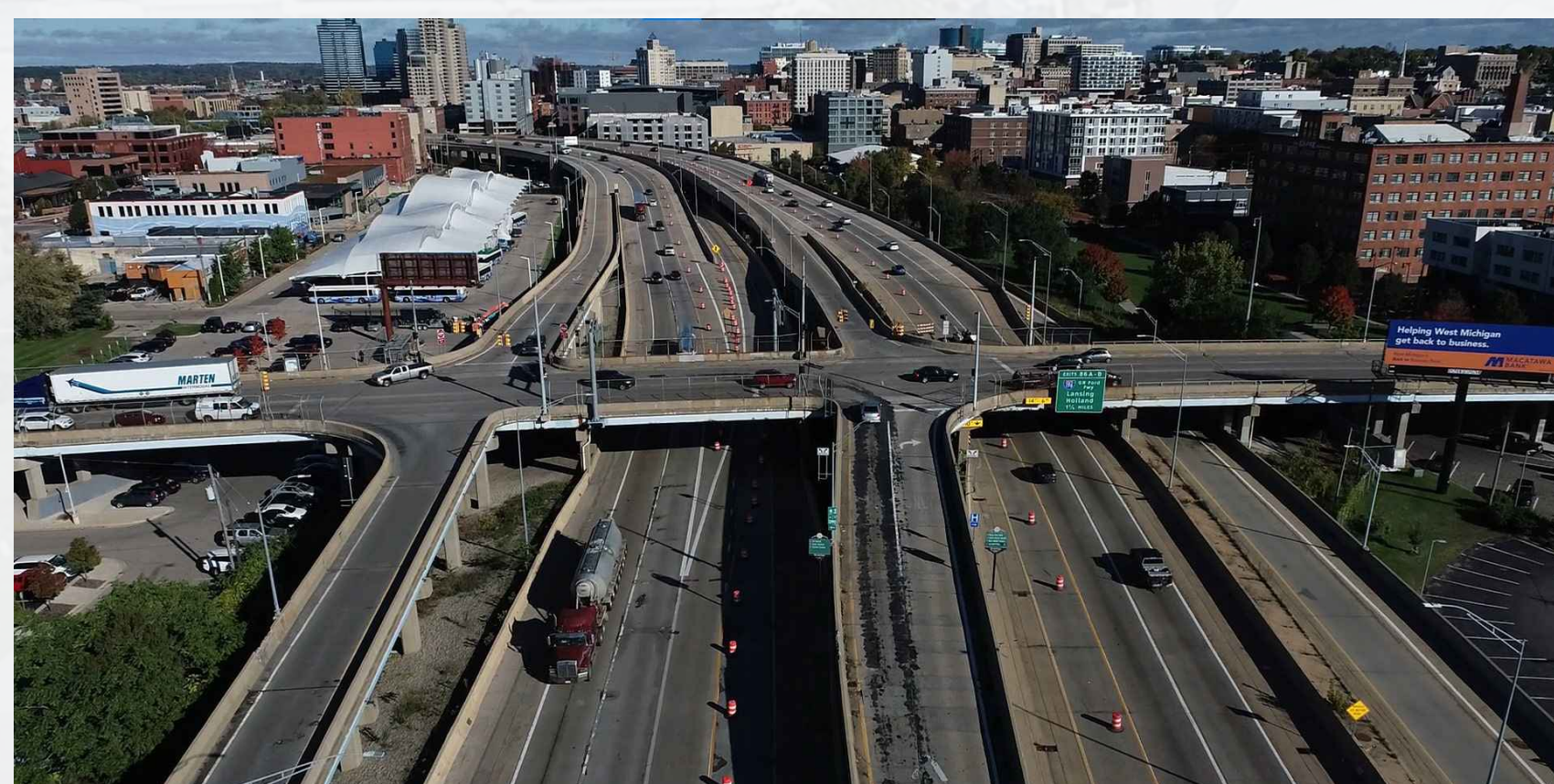
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CHERRY-TO-HALL INTERCHANGE OPTIONS - Option 3A



Option 3A: Wealthy Street Underpass (Aerial View)

This option flips Wealthy Street to an underpass, replaces the left-side ramps of northbound US-131 with right-side ramps, and connects to Cherry Street via a service drive.



Existing Wealthy Street Interchange Aerial View

Wealthy Street

*This view shows US-131 with four lanes and full shoulders



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CHERRY-TO-HALL INTERCHANGE OPTIONS - Option 3A



Option 3A: Wealthy Street Underpass (Street View)

Wealthy Street is converted to an underpass, with the US-131 freeway elevated. This option creates more direct access between local destinations such as the Downtown Market and the Rapid Central Station.





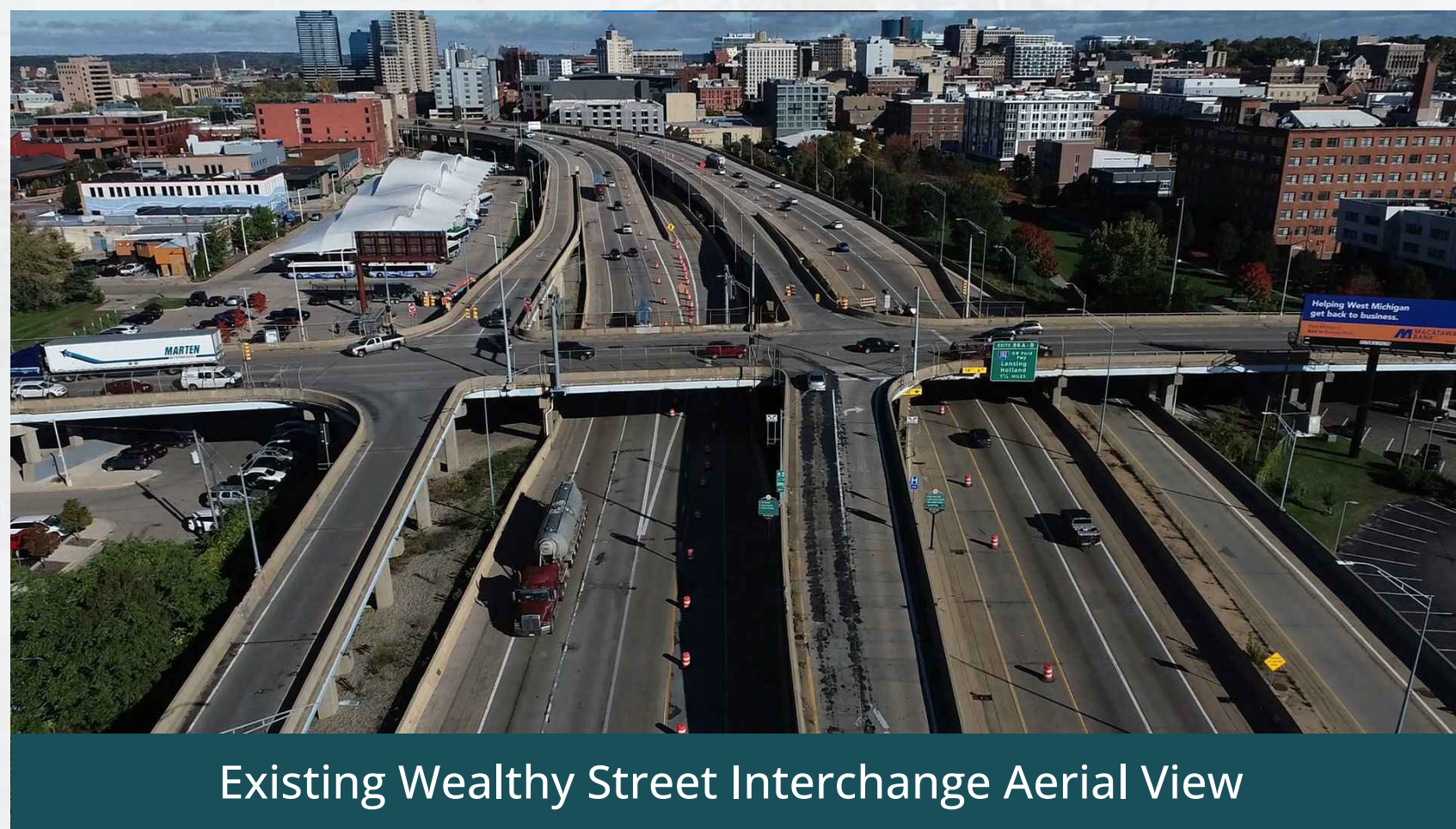
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HALL STREET-TO-CHERRY STREET INTERCHANGE OPTIONS - Option 3B



Option 3B: Wealthy Street Overpass (Aerial View)

This option retains Wealthy Street as an overpass with renovated streetscape, replaces the left-side ramps of northbound US-131 with right-side ramps, and connects to Cherry Street via a service drive.



Existing Wealthy Street Interchange Aerial View



*This view shows US-131 with four lanes and full shoulders



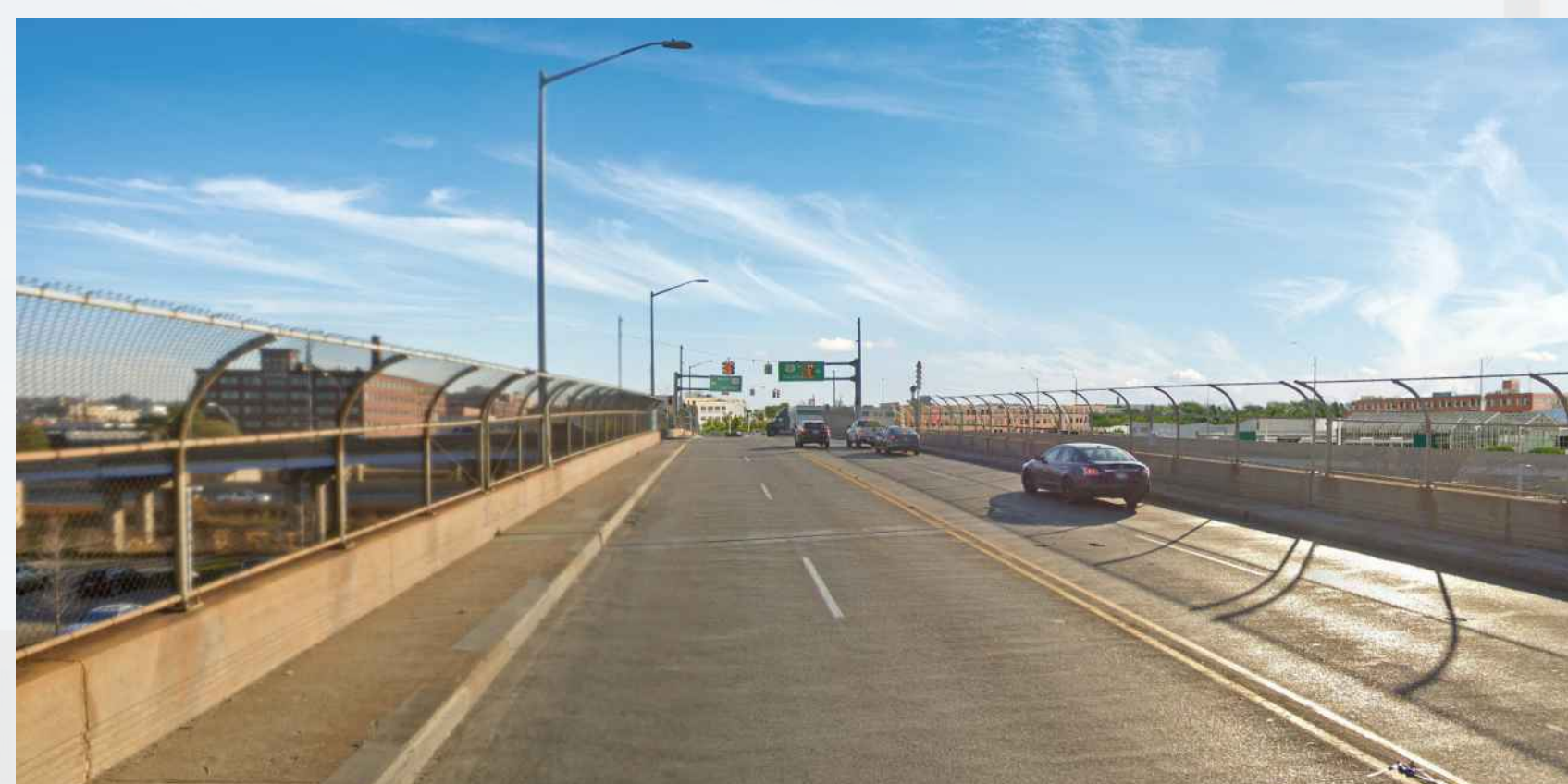
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HALL STREET-TO-CHERRY STREET INTERCHANGE OPTIONS - Option 3B



Option 3B: Wealthy Street Overpass (Street View)

This option includes widening of the sidewalk and added median space for pedestrian and traffic safety. It also includes upgraded street infrastructure such as pavement and lighting.



Existing Street View of the Wealthy Street Bridge over US-131





US-131 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY

LOCAL STREET CONNECTIONS - Graham Street Connection



Local Street Connections: Graham Street (Aerial View)

One of the local street connection options is to connect Graham Street east and west of US-131 as an underpass of US-131. The ramps of MLK Jr. (Franklin) Street will be mostly or completely removed, making it a street more focused on local connectivity.



Existing View of MLK Jr. (Franklin) Street and Graham Street

*This view shows US-131 with four lanes and full shoulders



US-131 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY

LOCAL STREET CONNECTIONS - Graham Street Connection



Local Street Connections: Graham Street (Street View)

This option connects Graham Street with Hynes Avenue and Century Avenue, with Graham Street being an underpass of US-131. Sidewalks and crosswalks are also added to improve non-motorized safety.





US-131 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY IMPROVEMENTS AND IMPACTS



Traffic Operations and Safety

- Traffic congestion, particularly during peak periods, is projected to worsen at existing capacity.
- Traffic safety and operations would **improve** with updated interchange design, added shoulders, and fewer on/off ramps.
- Adding lanes may bring further benefits in crash reduction and traffic operations, especially if traffic grows in the future.

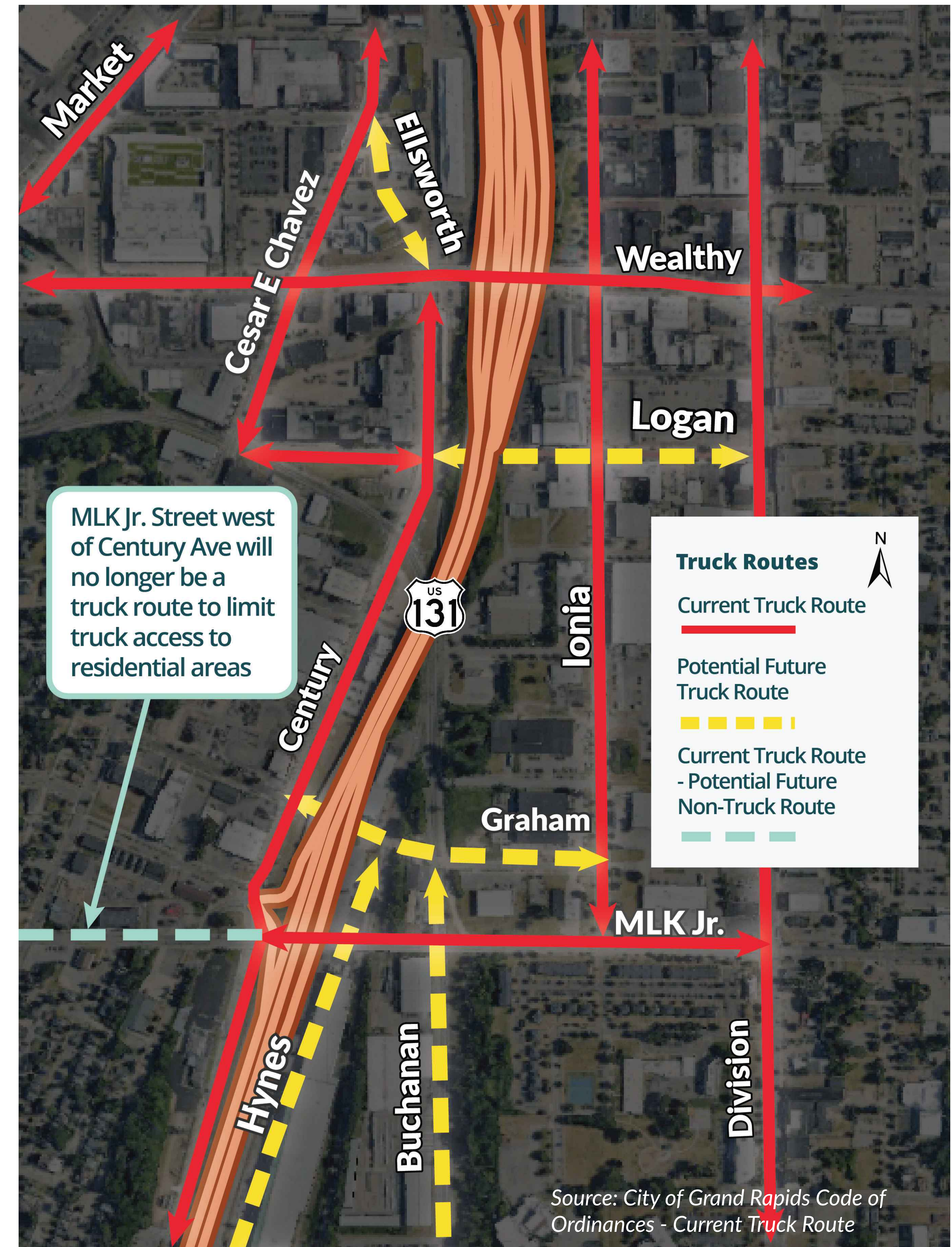
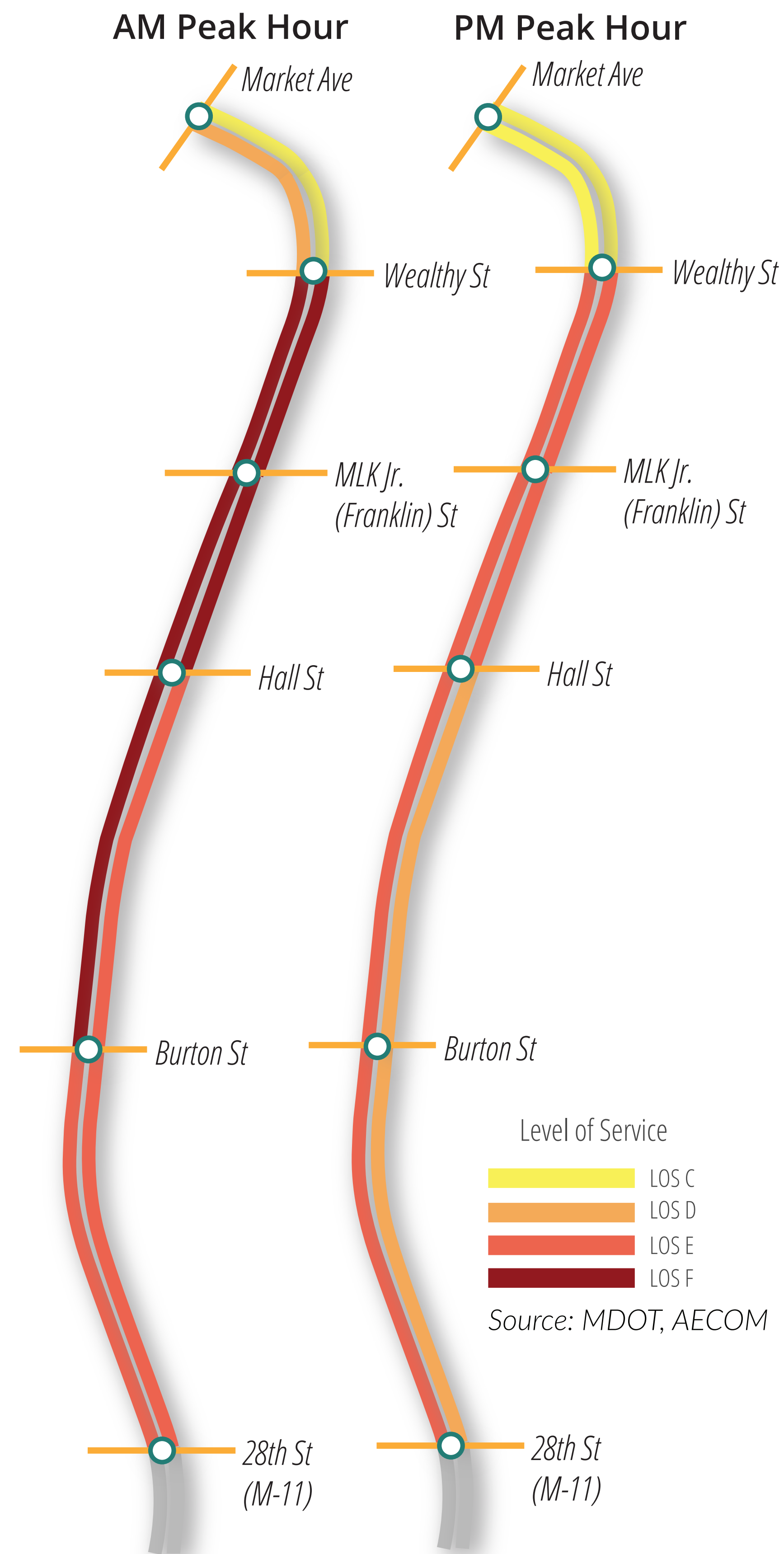
Study shows all current options will reduce crashes by 10 percent to 20 percent, with added-lane options having the highest impact (including serious injury and fatal crashes).

Study shows all current options will have improved traffic operations. Improving mainline operations may also reduce traffic using neighborhood roads during congested events.

Truck Routes and Circulation

- All options focus US-131 truck access at Wealthy Street and Hall Street, significantly improving usability of these interchanges for trucks.
- The options also create less incentive for trucks to access and use MLK, Jr. Street (and Cesar E Chavez Avenue).
- Options provide new connection beneath US-131 at Graham, a convenient link beneath freeway that helps with local circulation between Century Avenue and Hynes Avenue, including for trucks.

Future (2045) Level of Service, *No-Build*





US-131 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY

IMPROVEMENTS AND IMPACTS



Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity

- All options include new local street connections including complete pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, at Logan/Buckley Street and Graham Street.
- All options improve pedestrian/bike connectivity at existing crossings, including at MLK, Jr. Street (which could become important connector between neighborhoods, schools and riverfront trails).
- The options also allow for the creation of a street or trail connection at Kirtland Street, enhancing Plaster Creek Trail access.

Property Impacts

- Each of the current option involve impacts to some properties (or portions of those properties) directly along the US-131 corridor.
- Many of the impacts are at interchange areas, although the total amount needed does increase as more lanes are added. The totals range between 12-14 acres of property along the Study Corridor.
- Additional analysis needed to determine how impacts could be mitigated or avoided through design.

	Three Lanes + Full Shoulders	Three Lanes + Weave/Merge	Four Lanes
Interchange Options	ROW Acquisition (acres)	ROW Acquisition (acres)	ROW Acquisition (acres)
Option A	11.87	12.10	13.80
Option B	11.74	12.19	13.83

Your input is important to the future of US-131 corridor. Please scan the QR code on your device and to view online resources and take the survey to provide your thoughts on the US-131 PEL Study.



Online Resources



Survey

